THE PONDICHERRY (ALTERNATION OF NAME) BILL, 2006

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA): Okay; now, we shall take up the Pondicherry (Alternation of Name) Bill, 2006. Shri Regupathy to move the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I move :

> "That the Bill to alter the name of the Union Territory of Pondicherry, be taken into consideration."

Sir, before the hon. Members seek clarifications on this, I would like to say a few words on this Bill.

The people of Pondicherry have been demanding renaming of Pondicherry to 'Puducherry', as the territory was not present in ancient times. It came to be pronounced as 'Pondicherry' by foreign rulers. The Legislative Assembly of Pondicherry passed an official resolution in its meeting held on 15th October, 1980 to request the Government of India to pass the necessary legislation for altering the name of Pondicherry. The proposal was also approved by the then Council of Ministers of the Union Territory of Pondicherry. The Council of Ministers of the Government of Pondicherry in their meeting held on 30th July, 1996 reiterated their request for changing the name of Pondicherry as 'Puducherry', and forwarded the proposal to the Government of India for approval. The Chief Minister of Pondicherry in its letter dated 29.04.1999 again reiterated the proposal.

Sir, the name of the State or Union Territory can be changed by an Act of Parliament under article 3 of the Constitution. Normally, in the case of States, the President of India obtains the views of the State Legislature before recommending the Bill for change of name of the State to be introduced in Parliament. However, in case of Union Territories, such consultation is not necessary due to explanation 1 to the article 3 of the Constitution. However, the Legislative Assembly of Union Territory of Pondicherry also passed a Resolution requesting the change of name.

With these words, Sir, I commend this Bill to this august House for approval.

The question was proposed.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA): Shri Thirunavukkarasar. ...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Narayanasamy, you will also speak. But let him speak first. ...*(Interruptions)*... I have already called him. ...*(Interruptions)*... You speak please.

SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR (Madhya Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to take part in this discussion.

Sir, this is a very small Bill, but, at the same time, a very important Bill because it is concerned with the sentiments and emotions of the people of Pondicherry, as our hon. Minister has also mentioned.

At the outset, I would like to appreciate and congratulate Mr. Regupathy for bringing forward this Bill. He hails from my native district, and he has also replaced me from that constituency. Of course, I did not contest. So, he represents the Pudukkottai constituency which I represented last time.

Sir, the Pondicherry State Assembly had passed a Resolution in 1980. And, subsequent to that, the Cabinet was continuously insisting - in 1996, in 1999, etc., - on renaming the Union Territory of Pondicherry. I don't know why it took nearly 26 years to bring this Bill in this august House. Anyhow, it has come today.

Sir, we all know that there has been renaming of so many places in our country. Bombay was renamed Mumbai, Calcutta was renamed Kolkata, and, of course, in 1967, our great leader, the founder of all Dravidian parties, Shri C.N. Annadurai, popularly known as *Anna*, passed a Resolution as Chief Minister of the State to rename the State as Tamil Nadu. Before 1967, it was known as Madras State. When *Anna* became the Chief Minister of the State in 1967, he got the Resolution passed in the State Assembly. Subsequently, Parliament also passed a legislation to rename Madras State as Tamil Nadu. Similarly, now, the name Puducherry is being given to Pondicherry.

Sir, Puducherry is an ancient and historical name. After the French people took over Pondicherry, they changed the name from Puducherry to Pondicherry. Now, we are again renaming Pondicherry as Puducherry. For that, we have taken nearly 60 years. It took nearly 60 years to get the original, ancient name!

Sir, we all know that by renaming or altering the name, no new prosperity is going to come to the State. By changing or altering the name, all of a sudden, there is not going to be any new economic development. But, at the same time, it is important because it adds and enhances the glory and prestige to the State and to the people.

Sir, Pondicherry is a holy place too. It has a lot of important places which could attract lots of Indian and foreign tourists. I would request the Central Government that along with renaming the State, additional funds may be provided to the State. It is a small and beautiful State, which could earn more foreign exchange, which could attract more foreign tourists and which could attract more tourists from other States also. It is a holy place. Philosopher and Saint, Aurobindo's ashram is there. Freedom fighters like Bharatiyar, great Tamil poets like Bharatidasan, Subramanian Shiva and a lot of other great Tamil poets and Freedom fighters lived in that State.

Sir, it is a small but glorious State and hence, I would request the Central Government to grant more funds for the development of the State along with renaming it. I welcome this Bill. Thank you.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Thank you, hon. Vice-Chairman Sir, for giving me this opportunity to speak on the Bill renaming Pondicherry as Puducherry, which is a historic name. In the Constitution of India, the administration of Union Territories is governed by articles 239, 239-A, 239-AA, 239-AB, 239-B, 240 and 241. In the Schedule of the Constitution, as also in the Constitution itself, the name Pondicherry has been enshrined.

Sir, it is a Bill for the people of the State of Pondicherry to rename it as Puducherry. It has a historical background. We have got four conglomerations - *Puducherry*, *Karaikkal*, which is near Nagapattinam, *Mahe* near Thelicherry in Kerala and *Yene*, which lies near the Andhra Pradesh border, near Kakinada. Though it is a small State, it is a very beautiful State which is not polluted and the people of the State are peace-loving. There is no major law and order problem in the State. And, it is a development-oriented State. Sir, when we go into the historical background, initially, the Cholas were ruling the part of Karaikkal region and after that dynastic Kalappirans were there and they were ruling the State. Then foreign invasion was there - whether it was by the Portuguese; whether it was by the Spanish; and thereafter, the French people invaded. There was a war between the French and the English to claim this territory, and ultimately, by way of an Agreement between the French and the

English, this territory was retained by the French. The last ruler before the French came into existence was the Pallava Dynasty. They were ruling the State because they came up to Mamallapuram and Pondicherry area. Sir, this is our background. If we find out how this name 'Puducherry' has been evolved, we can find it from one of our places, called Arikannedu, which is about 7 kilometres from Puducherry town wherein the Roman Empire had trade with our territory. Coins, vessels and weapons used by Roman people were also found and now the excavation work is going on in that area. From that, we could find that the trade between our Puducherry and the Roman Empire was also going on in those days. Sir, if I name several names which have been given to Puducherry one by one, it will be really very interesting. The Portuguese called it Puducherria. Then, Sir, the Danish people called it Bolessero. Then, this Dutch people called it Bolacherry or Bolicherry. These were the names according to their local languages used in those countries. Then, French people occupied this territory in early 17th century and 18th century. They called it Puducherry. 'Puducherry', in our local language, Tamil language, means 'new colony'. 'Pudu' means 'new' and 'cherry' means 'colony'. This has been our historical background. When the French people left Pondicherry - because we got *de jure* independence in 1954, about 6-7 years after India got independence - there was a referendum. In the referendum, the people of Puducherry voted for the Puducherry to remain with the Indian Union. And, ultimately, the French people gave up their right and then they handed over the powers to Indian Government, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel played a major role in that. Sir, as far as this territory is concerned, though it is very small, we have got composite culture. We have got five official languages in our State. We have got Tamil as our official language; English as our official language; Malayalam, Telugu and French. Five recognised official languages are there in our State. But, Sir, sometimes, when there was change of Government at the Centre, the move was taken to merge our Pondicherry, and Karaikkal with Tamil Nadu, Mahe with Kerala and Yanem with Andhra Pradesh. The local people opposed it for the simple reason that there was an international treaty between the Government of India and the Government of France wherein the Government of India had given the solemn assurance that the Indian Government would maintain separate identity of the State. Sir, when Puducherry got independence, Pandit Nehru called it, 'a window of French culture'. We used to have more than ten thousand families of people of French origin living in our State, with the permission of the French Government. And, this is enshrined in the International Treaty itself. Sir, it

will be surprising to note that our Indian citizens who opted for French nationality, they went and worked there for 20 - 25 years - in case of services related to army or defence, they worked there 15 years - thereafter, they came back and settled in Puducherry. Sir, the amount of pension of those people after retirement is more than one lakh rupees per month, and, the French Government is giving them this amount. They are honouring the international treaty that had been signed between the Government of India and the French Government, and, it is continuing even today. Sir, when you convert the money, that is given to them in France, into Indian rupees, the pension amount goes up. Therefore, our per capita income is the highest - it is more than 55 thousand rupees per annum in Puducherry itself - compared to the adjoining States. The hon. Minister of State for Home Affairs knows it pretty well.

Sir, we have got a rich culture because we have got at our place not only the Indian culture but also the French culture. Sir, as far as education is concerned, we have French institutes in our place. One can study upto M.A. (French) in our area. Research work in French is also being done there. The French Government has established French Institute; and the French Consulate is also there to give visas to those who want to go to France.

Sir, one representative of the French Parliament has been elected amongst the French citizens from our territory. He is representing people of our area in the French Parliament. This is a system, which they have been evolving. I don't want to make a comparison between the French rule and the British rule. The French have developed the State as if it is their own territory, not like plundering our wealth like British did in other parts of the country. Sir, before the French people came to occupy that place, it was known as 'Poduga'. Thereafter, it was called Puducherry. This is the historical background that I wanted to give.

These are the sentiments of the people of that State. Sir, Tamil is a language, which is widely spoken in major portion of the State. People themselves want to restore the original name of Puducherry for their State. In 1980, there was a DMK-Congress Party coalition Government and in the Assembly, they passed a Resolution that the State should be renamed as Puducherry. The successive Governments have passed resolutions and sent them to the Central Government. We have also raised this matter, time and again, in this august House that the State should be renamed. Sir, the senior Member from BJP mentioned, Calcutta has been renamed as

Kolkata, Bombay has been renamed as Mumbai, Madras has been renamed as Chennai, and, on the basis of the historical background, we have to originate and go back to the name Puducherry, which the Central Government has considered. Accordingly, this Bill has been brought forward in this august House. I am grateful to the hon. Prime Minister, hon. Home Minister and the Minister of State for Home Affairs for having considered the feelings and sentiments of the people of the State, and, taking a decision that Pondicherry would be renamed as Puducherry.

Sir, having congratulated the hon. Minister, I would like to say that we have got certain demands from the State of Puducherry. Like the long-pending demand of renaming of the State, these are also some long pending demands, and, I would like to highlight these to the hon. Minister. Sir, first demand is the special category status for the State of Puducherry. Sir, several resolutions have been passed in the Assembly by the Elected Governments. Sir, we are a small State with a population of 10 lakh people. We feel proud in saying that the National poet, Bharathi lived there; the great revolutionary poet of our area, Bharathidasan lived there. He was born there. And, Subramaniam Siva was there. Very senior leaders were there. Many freedom fighters were also there. When freedom movement was going on in Tamil Nadu against the British, they took asylum in our territory. They came and took asylum in the French territory to fight against the Britishers. Lord Aurobindo came and settled there. The Aurobindo Ashram is one of the internationally-reputed societies which is now being run by the society. We are proud of it. My mother also lived there. It is a very sacred place. Now, Sir, we would like to develop the State. As the hon. Member Thirunavukkarasar*ji* said, small is beautiful. When they brought in a lot of changes in the Act, when hon. Vajpayee*ji* was the Prime Minister, I went and talked to him that we would like to have more funds for developing the State. He made an observation that small is beautiful. Many great leaders visited there consistently. Pandit Nehru came there. He considered it as a window of French culture. Hon. Shri Rajiv Gandhi, when he was the Prime Minister of India, came there. He has given very liberally to us whatever amount we demanded for the development of the State. Even during Narasimha Rao*ji*'s time, when he was the Prime Minister, funds were provided by the Central Government. The present Government is leaving behind all of them. Whatever money we wanted, whether it is for developing the State, whether it is for creating infrastructure for industrialisation or for tourism, they are giving money. I have no complaints about it. The Central Government is giving us funds. When the Tsunami

struck, when the people of the State were suffering, more than 700 people died in Karikal and in Puducherry. The hon. Home Minister came; hon. Minister of State came. All the leaders came there. Mr. Dayanidhi Maran came; Mr. T.R. Baalu was there; Dr. Anbumani Ramdoss was there; Mr. Chidambaram was there; Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar was there; Mr. G.K. Vasan came there. All the Ministers came there. All of them gave relief to us to such an extent that all the fishermen of that area have been relocated and given proper relief by the Government. The Central Government has to be appreciated in this regard because when people were in distress, the Central Government came to the rescue of those people. The Karnataka Government came; the Maharashtra Government also helped us, the Andhra Pradesh Government also helped us because it was not a question of one State alone. When the Central Government helped, the State Governments also helped us. I have no complaints about it.

Now, we have got a Central University there in our State. Now, we would like to have our own University for the State. We have got a prestigious medical research institute in our State. Pandit Nehru brought it to our State. He gave it to our State. Thereafter, a lot of medical colleges have now come up there. Pondicherry is becoming an educational hub. Medical tourism is also being developed in our State. Apart from that, from tourism point of view, Pondicherry is developing by leaps and bounds. But adequate infrastructure has to be raised. As the hon. Member has rightly said, we have to create adequate infrastructure for the tourists who are coming there. The world-famous Shanishwar temple is there in the Karikal region, where the people from all over the world, especially from North India, come. The Government of India has declared it as a 'temple town'. They are providing Rs. 100 crores alone for the temple development. But that is not a sufficient amount. We need Rs. 200 crores for developing the temple town, because we have to create facilities and infrastructure for the pilgrims who are coming there. It is 300 kilometres away from Chennai. Therefore, we want that temple town to be developed.

Then, Sir, the Special Economic Zone has been sanctioned by the Central Government for the purpose of having spare parts for the automobile industry and also the IT sector. We require assistance from the Government of India because our source of income is limited. Therefore, I would appeal to the hon. Minister of State for Home for developing the infrastructure in the Special Economic Zone. The Government of India should help us in that area so that we can see more and more number of

industries coming there and employment opportunities can be created for the local people.

Sir, now I would like to say something about the port development. The Government of India has also sanctioned a port there. The port which is there in Chennai, which carries the luggage and also the ships that have been docked there, it takes 15 days for a consignment to move. We have got a better rail link now because electrification has been done, connecting Pondicherry, Puducherry and Chennai. On movement of goods, there is no problem. For developing the port, the State Government requires additional funds.

Now, I come to the political issue. This is the feeling of the people of the State. We have a State Legislature, Members of Legislative Assembly, an elected Chief Minister, a Council of Ministers, Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha), Members of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), and ultimately Governor is the authority. Governor can veto the decision taken by the Government. But we are not a State. We are directly under the control of the Home Ministry only. We are at the mercy of the Home Ministry only. When people have elected a Government to power, then the will of the people should prevail. Shrimati Sushma Swaraj is the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Home Affairs and we are also in that Committee. She was kind enough and the Committee has recommended that Puducherry has to be given special category status, because being a small territory, we have to develop, and thereafter, we will become a full State. This has been our long pending demand. The Legislative Assembly passed a unanimous resolution. Also, this is the will of the people. Therefore, this has to be decided. The Standing Committee has submitted its Report, and its recommendations have been given here. I would request the hon. Minister to consider it.

Now, I come to B-II status for the State Government employees. I will take only 2-3 minutes and then conclude. As far as the State Government employees are concerned, whenever there are arrears to be paid to the States, it is not being followed in the Union Territory, because the Home Ministry has to clear it and send it. This has been our long pending demand that B-II status has to be given to the city of Puducherry, so that the Government employees get the benefit.

Three, the major issue is the recognition of the ST population in the State. The ST population, though it is very small in number, has not been

recognised so far. We have been demanding this from the Government of India. Whenever the State Government recommends it, the Social Welfare Ministry returns the papers. Therefore, this issue has to be considered.

Very few central freedom fighters are there. Whenever their papers are recommended by the State Government, they are being rejected by the Central Government. (*Time-bell*) When they submit all the records, they are not being considered. Therefore, Sir, this issue has to be taken up.

These are the areas - political angle, economic point of view, development orientation, and tourism -- the Central Government has to consider for developing the small Union Territory of Puducherry. I hope the hon. Minister of State will consider this. I am grateful to the hon. Minister, the hon. Home Minister, hon. Prime Minister, and this august House for taking up this Bill for renaming the Union Territory as Puducherry. This is the feelings of the people of the State. Earlier they were under the French Rule. Now, we are trying to bring back that name. For this, I am grateful to all of you.

SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM (Tamil Nadu): Sir, in *Tamil* it is always Puducherry. In all *Tamil* journals and even on transport buses, it is written only as 'Puducherry.' Now, this alteration of name is taking place as per law, because in English and in all official documents it is known as 'Pondicherry.' The DMK party takes pride in this changing of name, because the DMK party was instrumental in bringing the resolution in the assembly. ...*(Interruptions)*... Both the Congress Party and the DMK Party. That was in 1980. In 1996 and 1999, when the DMK Party was in power, it was pressed. I am very happy that Shri S. Regupathy, a Minister from the DMK Party, is piloting the Bill. Sir, how the name Pondicherry came into being is very interesting. It was originally written as Puducherry. When French people wrote it, it is said, they spelt 'Pudu' as 'Poudu'. After that, it was misspelt and the third letter 'u' was inverted as 'n' and it became Ponducherry and later, it was called as Pondicherry. This is how the name changed. That was the story. However, we have to revert back and we have to have our original name. So, it is really a sense of pride for Pondicherry people like Mr. Narayanasamy and others that they have their own and original name which was replaced.

Sir, during the British rule, as informed by the hon. Member, it was a haven for the freedom fighters in India because it was a French territory. Therefore, in order to escape from the clutches of law, to be away and

continue their activities of fighting for the freedom like the famous poet Subramaniam Bharati and others. They lived there in Pondicherry and continued their fight for freedom. Therefore, the majority of the Tamil freedom fighters, on one occasion or the other, had to visit Puducherry to stay, instruct and get training or educate others. Sir, there are some other names similar to this. It is said that the names, which were originally in local language in Tamil Nadu, were changed for several reasons. I can give you one or two examples. Pondicherry is on the East Coast which is called Coramandal. Sir, Coramandal itself is not the original name. It was originally called as Cholamandalam because that region was ruled by Chola kings. So, it was called Cholamandalam. The Britishers misspelt it and called it as Coramandal. Like this, the Western Coast was called Cheramandalam. Later, it was called Kerala. Like, Mamallapuram was original name which was later changed to Mahabalipuram. Therefore, I congratulate the hon. Minister for bringing in the old name and reverting back to the ancient name.

Sir, as far as the development of Pondicherry is concerned, Shri Narayanasamy said that something more has to be done. Now, Sir, air service is being revived between Pondicherry and Chennai. That is not sufficient. Sir, a beautiful coastal road connects Chennai to Pondicherry. One could see one of the most beautiful sites by road journey here. On the one side, there is the backwaters of the river and on the other side, there is the sea. Therefore, it is called Idaikalinadu, the land in-between two waters. That is a beautiful place to see on the East Coast road. Sir, apart from this road, there should be ferry service between Chennai and Pondicherry. Sir, that demand should also be considered by the hon. Minister. With these words, Sir, I welcome the change. I congratulate the Minister. Thank you for the opportunity.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA): Now, the hon. Minister.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I thank all the hon. Members for supporting this Bill. Pondicherry became a Union Territory on 16th August, 1962. The Union Territory of Pondicherry has been named in Part II of First Schedule of the Constitution as 'Pondicherry'. But the feelings of the people of Pondicherry ...*(Interruptions)*... He wants to rename it as Puducherry. So, this Bill has been introduced. Hon. Member, Shri Narayanasamy, has given the complete history of the names and what were the names used before. In my opening remarks I have already mentioned

that the sentiments of the people of Puducherry have been considered and that is why this Bill has been placed before this House for its consideration.

As regards the other issues raised by hon. Members, about more funds, I would like to state that due care will be taken while formulating the Budget of the UT. With these words, I request this august House to pass this Bill. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA): I shall now put the motion moved by the Minister to vote. The question is:

That the Bill to alter the name of the Union Territory of Pondicherry be taken into consideration.

The motion was adopted.

Claluses 2 to 10 were added to the Bill.

Clasue 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, I beg to move:

That the Bill be passed.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

THE ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2005

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Sir, I beg to move:

> "That the Bill further to amend the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, be taken into consideration."

Sir, the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 provides for the control of production, supply and distribution of essential commodities. Section 3 of the said Act empowers the Central Government to control production, supply and distribution of essential commodities.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI) in the Chair.]

It also empowers the Central Government under section 5 (b) of the said Act to delegate the powers to make orders or issue notifications under section 3 to the State Government or an officer or authority subordinate to the State